

# THE OER QUALITY DEBATE: EXPLAINING ACADEMICS' ATTITUDES ABOUT QUALITY

Cox, G.;

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# The OER quality debate: explaining academics' attitudes about quality

By

Glenda Cox, University of Cape Town  
OEC Global. Krakow, Poland (April 2016)



Glenda Cox



Research



Management (2010-2014)



Transition to Library (2014 ongoing)-Training  
Advocacy and Support



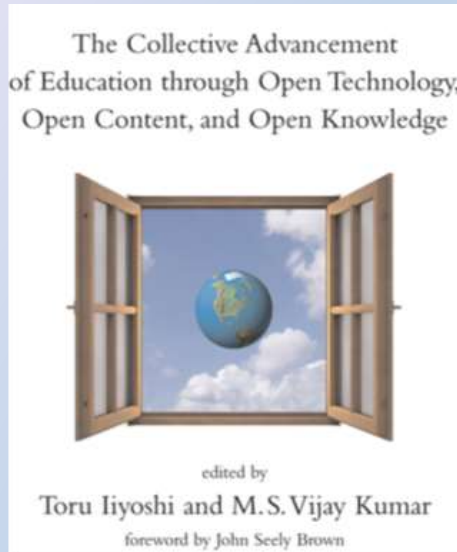


# **EXPLAINING THE RELATIONS BETWEEN CULTURE, STRUCTURE AND AGENCY IN LECTURERS' CONTRIBUTION AND NON- CONTRIBUTION TO OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES IN A HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION**



# Enabler and Barriers to contribution of OER

## Context



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*Empirical evidence*

Relations

Culture

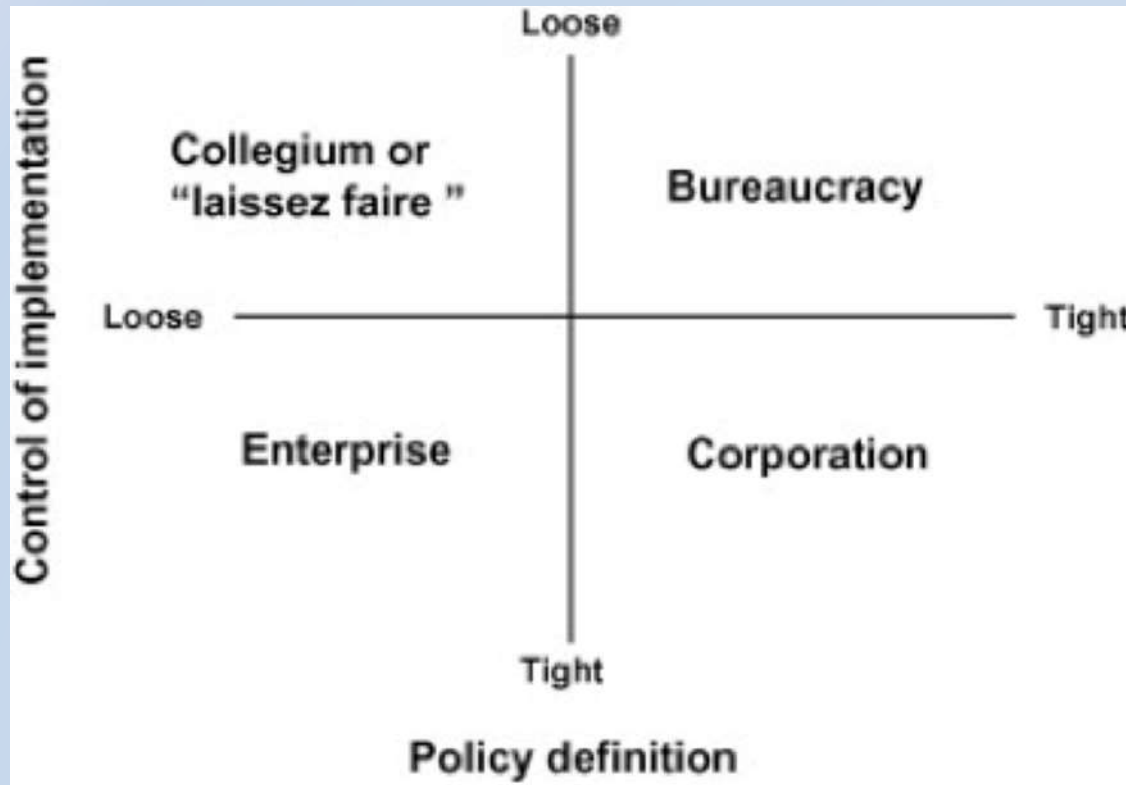
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# Institutional Culture



McNay 1995



# Culture and Structure: Quality assurance @ UCT

CULTURE	STRUCTURE	Defining features	What: Focus of quality assurance	Agency	Who is responsible ?	
Collegial-autonomy and academic freedom	No guidelines for quality of teaching materials, but encouraging policy	Some support	Pedagogy	Author: Pride of authorship	Academic	
	TYPE  Policy					

# INTERVIEW DATA

Academics believe their teaching materials will improve through peer scrutiny BUT they are still worried about quality and want a quality check

# Peer scrutiny will improve the quality of teaching materials (n:11)

**Why are there still concerns?**

Poor quality materials reflect badly on the institution (n:10)

Some feel up to individual to share good quality materials (n:5)

Some contributors feel materials good as they are (n:5)

Quality assurance on OER in the repository (n:9)

Non-contributors worried about readiness of materials (n:5)

What about academic freedom?

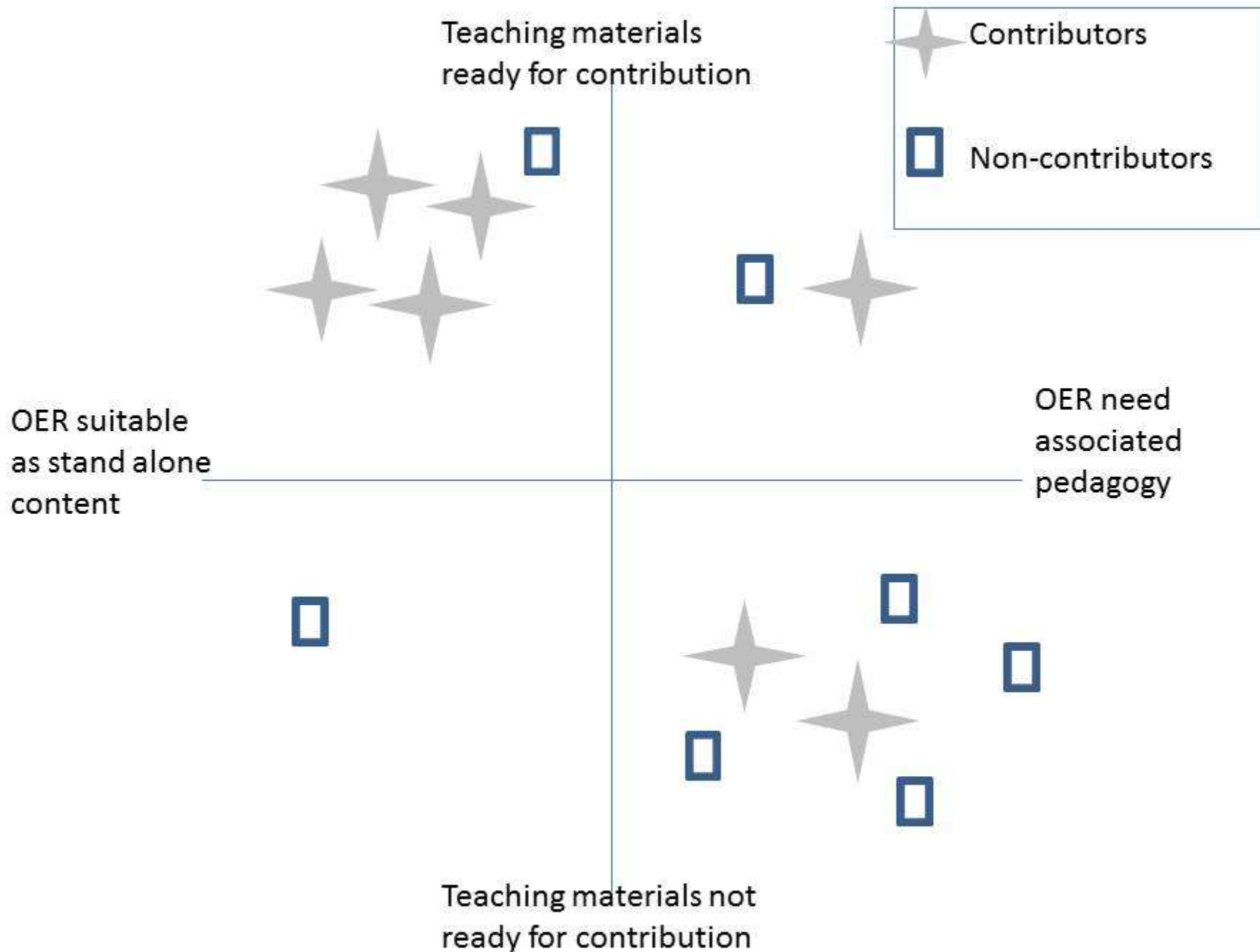
What kind of check and by whom?

Contributors	Non-contributors
Readiness:	
If they're ready for students to see, then they're as ready as they're going to get."	"They don't look good enough to put out there"
Who is responsible?	
"I think that each individual preparing their materials must be sure that their material is substantively correct, sound or critical "	"...double sign off ideally someone a year higher (in the teaching progression)"
Quality assurance?	
"It is more important just to encourage people to share than to police...UCT should just leave it alone"	"Poor materials would get out there is there was no gatekeeper"

# Production QA/Pedagogical QA?

**“It’s interesting, because when you said the word quality, I was thinking...I actually was thinking pedagogy” (Contributor)**

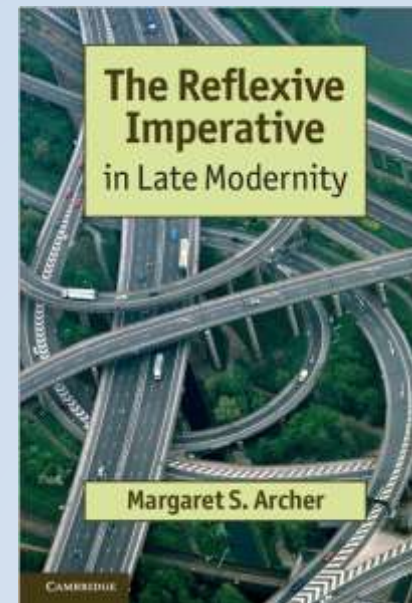
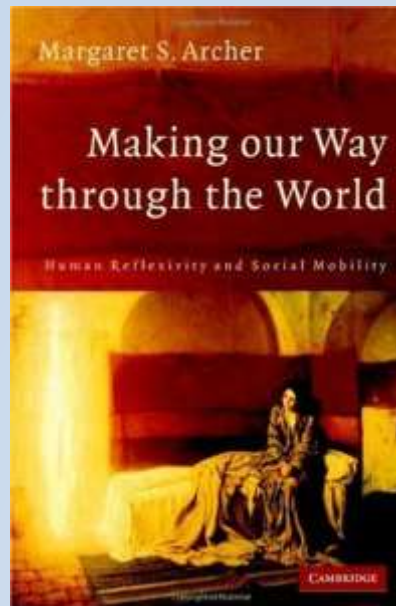
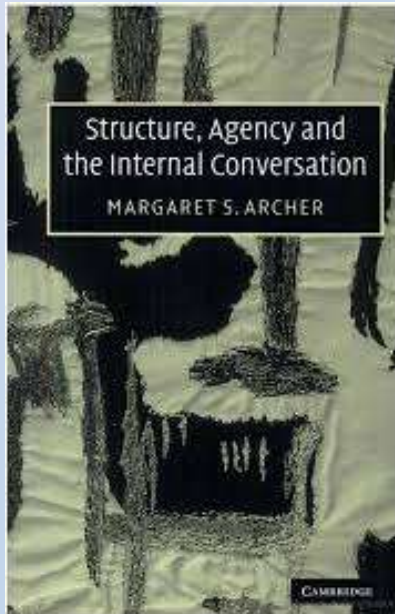




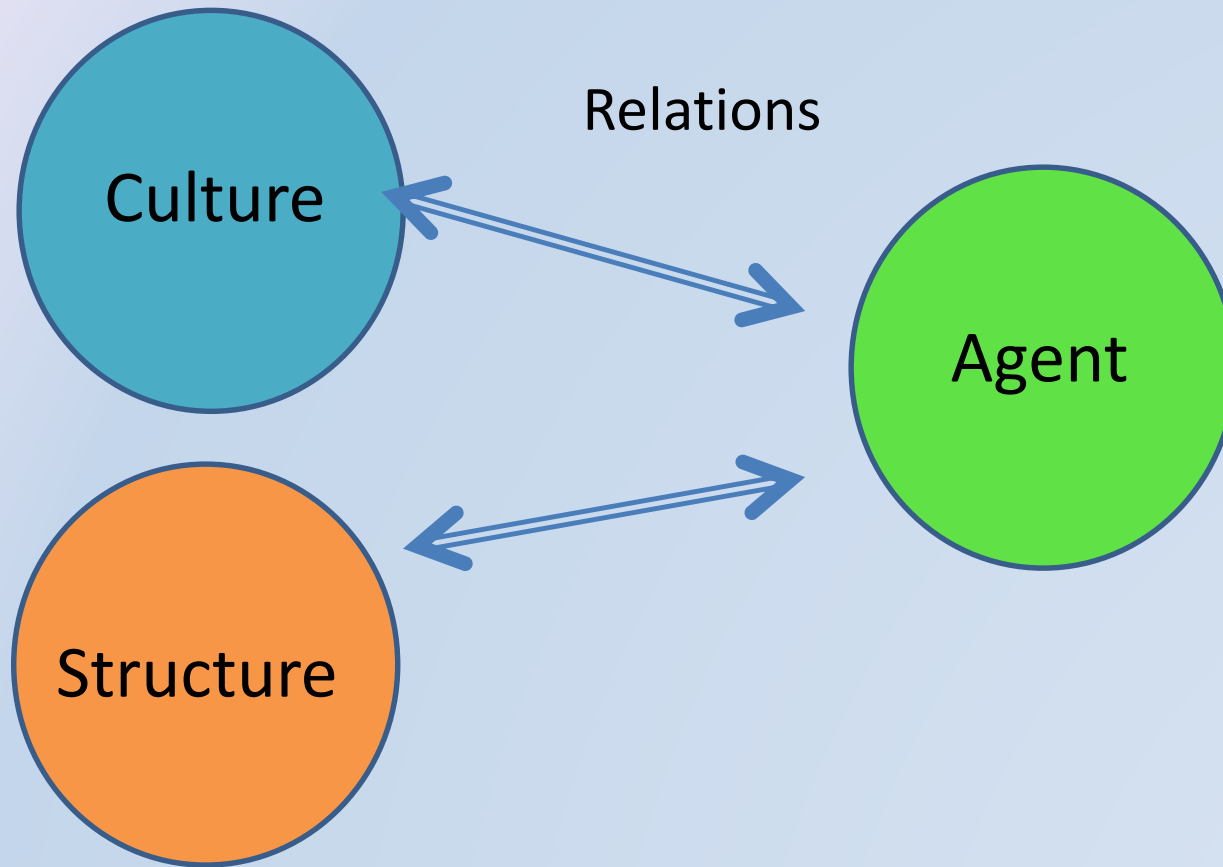
**HOW DO WE EXPLAIN WHY SOME  
ACADEMICS ARE CONCERNED AND  
OTHERS ARE NOT CONCERNED ABOUT  
QUALITY AT ALL?**

# Margaret Archer

- Social Realism-Sociological theory



# Margaret Archer (Social Realism)



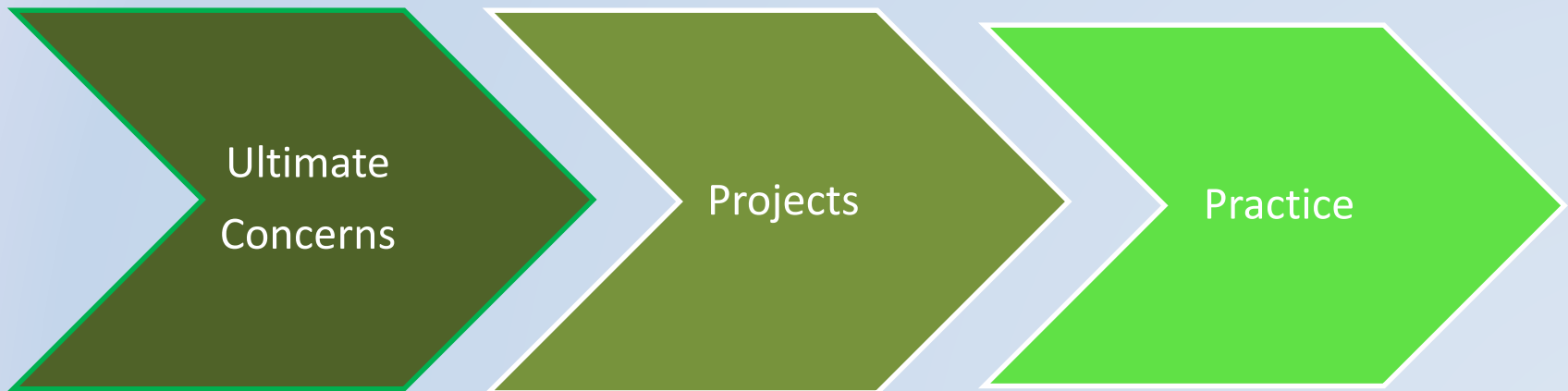
“How does structure influence agency?”

# Ultimate concerns

...Individuals develop and define their *ultimate concerns*, those internal goods that they care about most (Archer 2007:42)

...develop course (s) of action to realise that concern by elaborating a *project*...

Translated into a set of *practices*



Agents ask:

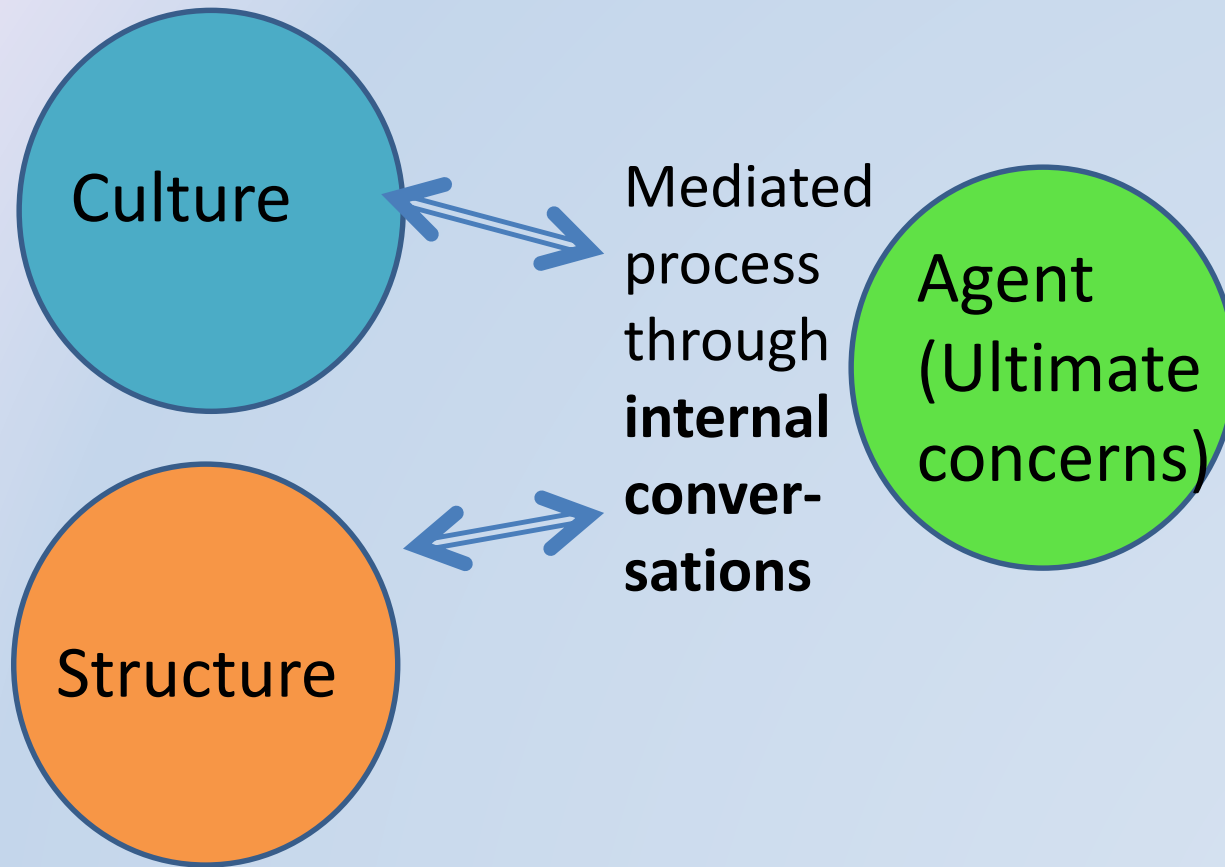
*“What do I want and how do I go about getting it?”*

*“What should I do?”*





# Margaret Archer (Social Realism)



# Internal conversations: modes

**Communicative reflexives:** Those whose internal conversation require completion and confirmation by others before resulting in a course of action

**Autonomous reflexives:** Those who sustain self-contained internal conversations, leading directly to action

**Meta-reflexives:** Those who are critically reflexive about their own internal conversations and critical about effective action in society

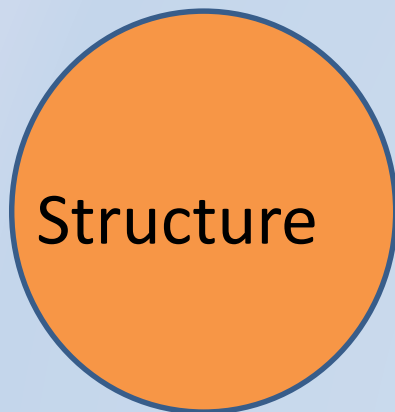
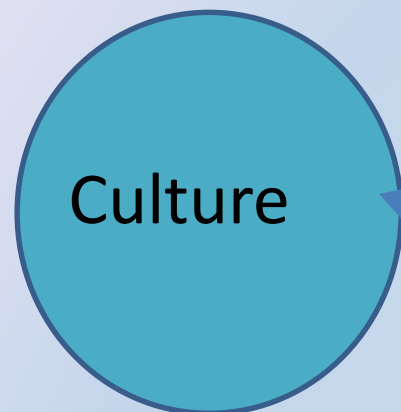
**Fractured reflexives:** Those whose internal conversations intensify their distress and disorientation rather than leading to purposeful courses of action



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*Relations*



Communicative  
reflexives

Autonomous  
reflexives

Meta-reflexives

Fractured  
reflexives

*Social Powers*

*Personal Powers*

# What modes of reflexivity are my participants practising?

Higher education-Archer suggests academics should all be meta-reflexives (as their concerns are focused on social issues)?

And meta-reflexives should contribute OER because their concerns about social issues...

# Methods

September 2013:

- In depth interviews and a questionnaire (for demographic and technology use information)

September 2014:

- Open ended questions in a questionnaire regarding any change in status and a methodological tool (ICONI)

# Internal Conversation Indicator (ICONI)

This questionnaire was developed by Margaret Archer in 2007 and refined in 2008.

It was designed in order to identify a person's dominant mode of reflexivity, it includes 13 questions.

The ICONI was tested for reliability and it was found that it “accounted for 46.8% of the variance on factor analysis, which compares respectably with directly comparable research instruments employed in social psychology” (Archer 2008:4)





# Unexpected results

- Not all meta-reflexives
- **And** it is not the meta-reflexives who are contributing

# ICONI

	Contributors	Non-contributors
Communicatives		
Autonomous	5	1
Meta-reflexives		5
Fractured (meta)	1	
Unclassified (both auto/meta)	1	1

# CONSIDERING AGENCY AND QUALITY

# How internal conversations mediate the actions of agents...

Macroscopic structural and cultural factors	Autonomous	Meta-reflexive
Stances towards constraints and enablements	strategic	subversive
Look for approval from	No one/self	Themselves/ always critical
Action orientations	Self-discipline	Self-transcendence
Ultimate concerns	Practical order	Self and social transcendence
Internal conversations	task	value
Main institutional impact	Market/work	Third sector

Who are the non-contributors of OER:

Altruism focused on the classroom

Belief in the value of teaching

Critical of self and society

Range of Technical ability (not essential)

Most no social media use

Who are the contributors of OER:

Altruism as ultimate concern (Global South)

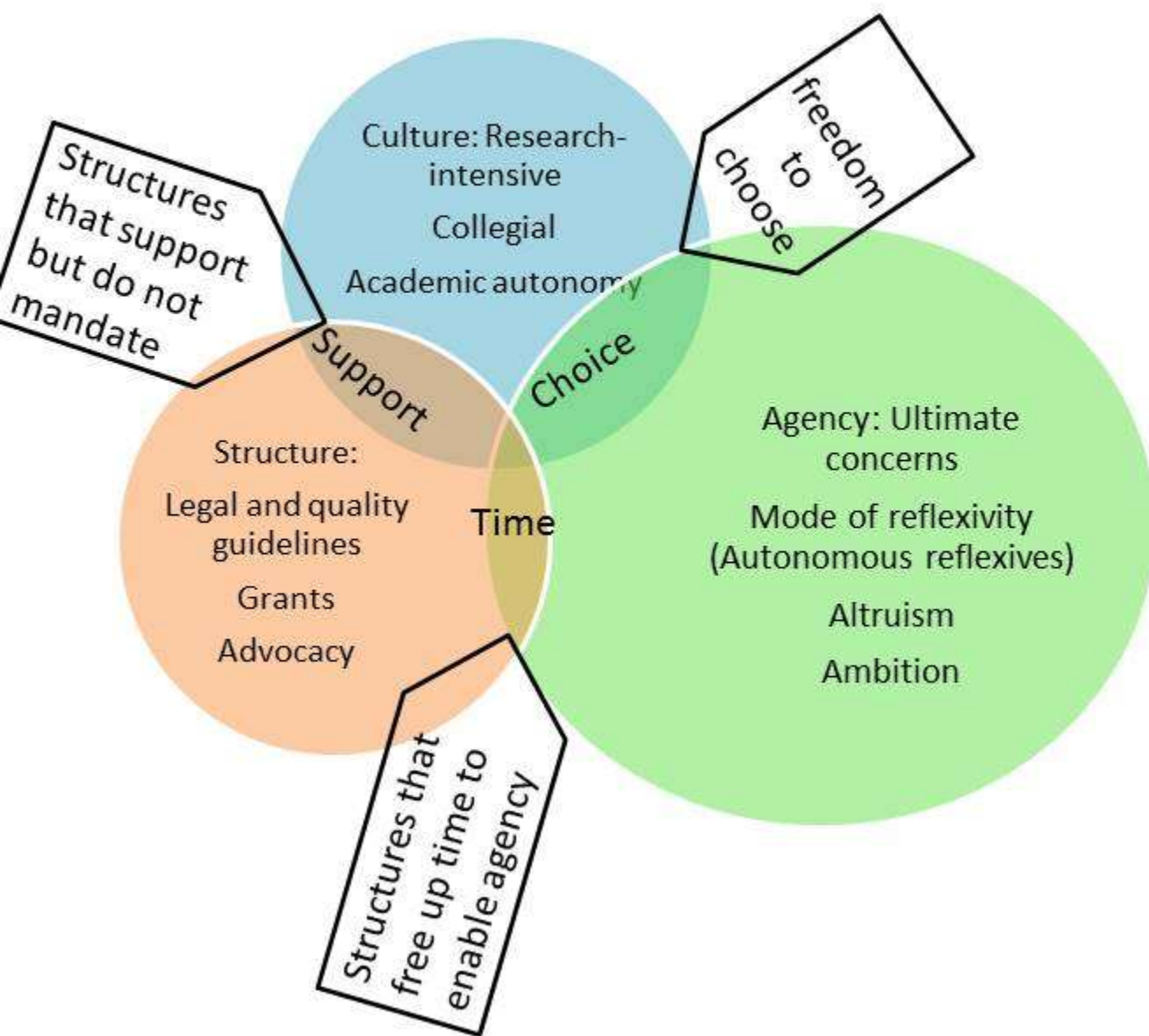
Ambitious, confident and self assured

Multi task:

research and teaching

Technical ability (not essential for contribution)

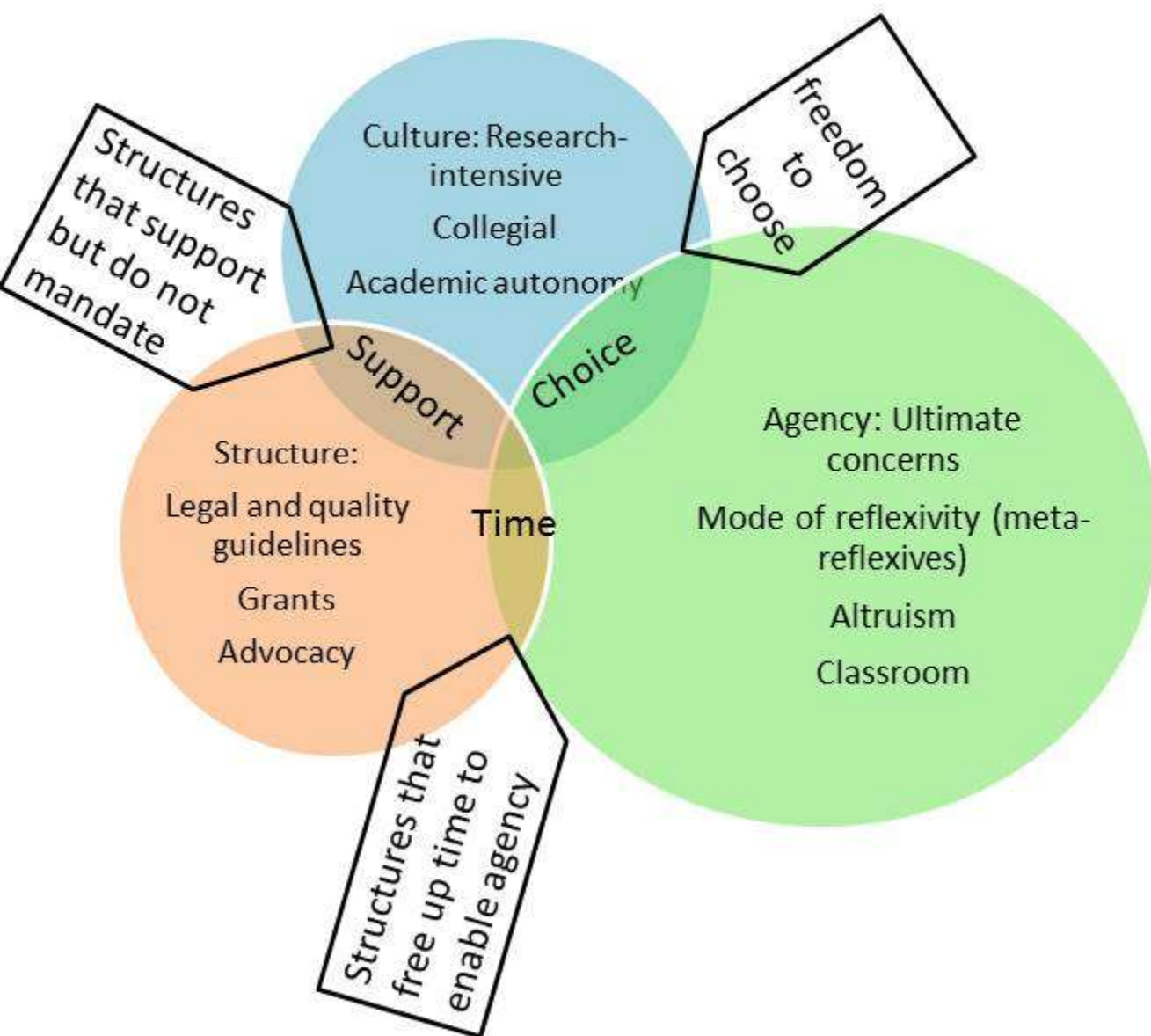
Social media use (not essential contribution)



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Altruism as ultimate concern (Global South)  
Ambitious, confident and self assured  
Multi task:  
research and teaching  
Technical ability (not essential for contribution)  
Social media use (not essential contribution)





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# **CONSIDERING CULTURE, STRUCTURE AND AGENCY FOR THE QUALITY ASSURANCE OF OER**

# Quality frameworks in the literature

Process/framework	Type (Atenas et al. 2014)	Who is responsible	Example
Pride of Authorship		Author	UCT
Learning design and layout	Policy	Education specialists	MIT
Peer review	Social	Network of peers	Ghana also Merlot
Technical tools (Clements et al. 2015)	Technological	Educational specialists	Merlot
2 tier approach (Masterman & Chan, 2015)		Author and educational specialists and peers	
TIPS (Kawachi, 2014)		Author with some guidance from educational specialists	

CULTURE	STRUCTURE	Defining features	Type	What: Focus of quality assurance	AGENCY	Who is responsible
Collegial-autonomy and academic freedom	No guidelines or mandate	Limited capacity	Technological-review in repository and /or social	Production and pedagogy	Author, Repository designers, peers	Author
Bureaucratic	Mandate from management	Academics and institution	Policy for OER	Production and pedagogy	Author plus team	Education specialist and peers
Managerial	Structure part of process/eg. Distance institution	Curriculum specialists and academic	Policy for OER and quality of materials	Pedagogy	Management, Less autonomy	Institution

# What does this mean for contribution?

- Consider culture, structure and agency
- Ultimate concerns drive agents
- Mode of reflexivity helps to explain why academics are so concerned about quality and other aspects

“...:endless assessment of whether or not what they devoted themselves to as the ultimate concern(s) is still worthy...”(Archer 2006:283)

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<http://yourcareermatters.files.wordpress.com/2010/07/praise.jpg>

Some of the slides were adapted from slides created by Michael Paskevicius : [mike.vicious@gmail.com](mailto:mike.vicious@gmail.com)